



Drinking Water FAQs

How is my water treated?

Water from Lake Auburn goes through coarse mesh screens which strain out leaves, grasses, and other solids. The water is then disinfected with Ultra Violet light treatment to inactivate viruses. Chlorine is added to disinfect any pathogens. The water treatment process continues by adding sodium hydroxide for pH balance, orthophosphate for corrosion control, and fluoride. Then, the treated water enters the distribution system.

What is a filtration plant, and why don't we have one?

A filtration plant chemically, biologically, and physically separates out contaminants from drinking water. Due to Lake Auburn's superior water quality, the EPA determined that water from Lake Auburn meets all requirements of the Safe Drinking Water Act, Surface Water Treatment Rule. This allows Auburn Water District and Lewiston Water Division to maintain a filtration waiver. In simple terms, since there aren't contaminants to filter out, we don't need a filtration plant. A filtration plant would cost at least \$35 million to build, \$2 million annually to maintain, and would increase customer water rates by 100-200%.

Is chlorine safe to drink?

Chlorine is safe to ingest as long as it is diluted and in small amounts. The CDC states that chlorine levels up to 4 milligrams per liter (mg/L or 4 parts per million (ppm)) are safe to drink. If you have specific health concerns contact your local water utility and healthcare provider.

Is the water in Auburn and Lewiston the same?

The water for Auburn and Lewiston come from the same location and are treated the same way. Lewiston on occasion has a slightly higher dosage of chlorine, but that is only because a higher volume of water is being distributed to Lewiston.

Is there lead in my water?

Lead is not present in Lake Auburn, the water from the treatment plant, or the Lewiston or Auburn distribution pipes leading to homes, businesses, and municipalities. Traces of lead may come from lead solder used inside buildings to join pipes, lead lined service pipes, or household fixtures like a faucet.

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Why does my water suddenly smell like chlorine?

If it suddenly starts to smell, it is because the chlorine is reacting with a compound locally to the tap. Water is treated with a set dosage of chlorine at the treatment plant and is safe to drink. If you have concerns call your local water utility.

Why does my water have a slight brown/red color?

Water might have a slight color due to cast iron pipes, or due to events such as hydrant flushing or a water main break. If your water has a slightly different color, keep the water running for a minute or two until it runs clear. If it does not turn clear call your local water utility.

How regulated is the water?

The Treatment Plant reports all data to the EPA and submits monthly reports to the Maine Drinking Water Program, which is run by the Maine Department of Health and Human Services. Water coming from the Lake Auburn intake pipe and into the treatment plant is continuously monitored for pH, turbidity, dissolved oxygen, total dissolved solids, conductivity, and temperature. Water leaving the treatment plant is continuously monitored for levels of fluoride, chlorine, pH, and temperature. Every day at both distribution systems, (Auburn Water District, and Lewiston Water Division) water samples are tested for levels of fluoride, chlorine, chlorine residuals, pH, temperature, orthophosphate, and bacteria. The Bates Weather Buoy that is out on the water from spring through fall, constantly monitors water quality while giving live updates every 15 minutes. Water quality specialists from Lewiston and Auburn sample the lake every week from when Lake Auburn is Ice Out (spring) to lake turnover (late fall).

Any and all questions about your tap water should be directed to your local water utility. They will not know there is an issue unless you reach out.

Auburn Water District:
(207) 784-6469
7:30 am - 4:00 pm (M-F)
awsd.org

Lewiston Water Division:
(207) 513-3003
7:00 am - 4:00 pm (M-F)
lewistonmaine.gov/195/Water-Sewer-Division